

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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Poland: Jaruzelski's December

Summary

Although some observers have voiced doubt about General Jaruzelski's ability to survive this month in power, in our view, he has managed the initial stage of the Popieluszko affair with considerable aplomb. He has kept public order, reassured at least some of his allies, and secured the Primate's assistance in restricting militant priests. He has also cowed the human rights watch committees and won some acclaim for ensuring a fair investigation of the murder. Appearances suggest that he has turned a potential disaster into an opportunity to remove a political opponent, Miroslaw Milewski. [redacted]

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Jaruzelski's political strength will be further tested this month, however, particularly if he attempts to oust some political opponents at the party plenum scheduled for sometime this month. Jaruzelski clearly has the support of the majority of the leadership, and at least tacit Soviet support. He can boast of short term economic achievements, and disarm hardline criticism by pointing to his own tough policies toward Solidarity and the church. Jaruzelski's weaknesses--a narrow power base and a chronically ill economy--are long term issues that he has managed to cope with in the past, but will plague him for the foreseeable future. [redacted]

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Jaruzelski's recent efforts to dampen expectations of a thorough purge of the security apparatus probably indicates he does not plan a wholesale housecleaning. A limited purge will not satisfy the populace and will leave Jaruzelski reliant on a small cadre of military and civilian supporters and on a party apparatus that resists implementing decisions made in Warsaw. Moscow still seems to view Jaruzelski as Poland's best hope for now and will allow him some leeway to deal with his political problems. We doubt, however, Moscow would tolerate an emasculation of the hardline faction. [redacted]

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This memorandum was requested by Paula Dobriansky of the National Security Council. It was prepared by [redacted] East European Division, Office of European Analysis. Comments and questions are welcome and should be addressed to [redacted] Chief, East European Division, [redacted]

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Introduction

In recent years December has been a troublesome month for Polish authorities. Worker unrest following price increases in December 1970 brought down Wladyslaw Gomulka. Martial law was declared in December 1981. And commemorating these anniversaries has raised the tension level between the rulers and the ruled, requiring the use of force on occasion to contain demonstrations. Finally, the shortages that are a way of life in Poland seem more distressing during the holiday period and add to the general sense of unrest even though the regime makes an effort to boost supplies during the Christmas season. [REDACTED]

This December probably will be especially tense because of popular expectations that General Jaruzelski will bring the murderers of Father Popieluszko to justice. [REDACTED] the Popieluszko tragedy has overtaken food supplies as the dominant subject of conversation among the populace. A party plenum is also expected in December. We believe it will give Jaruzelski the opportunity to try to use the Popieluszko slaying to purge his hardline opponents. The outcome may profoundly affect Jaruzelski's political future and his efforts to establish a national accord. [REDACTED]

The Impact of the Popieluszko Affair

The murder of the priest has widened the splits long evident in many Polish institutions. The tragedy accentuated the division among the clergy over the degree of accommodation Cardinal Glemp displays toward the regime. The Primate's ban late last week on the militant preaching of Father Malkowski is the latest manifestation of this inner church quarrel. But it is the least likely of all the Polish institutional disputes to get out of control. [REDACTED]

The split within Solidarity parallels the radical versus moderate factions within the church but is far more vocal and less subject to discipline. The human rights watch committees, formed against Walesa's wishes by the more militant Solidarity leaders and their advisers, might lead to a serious confrontation with the regime if they become active. Walesa, meanwhile, will have an opportunity to present his views at the commemoration, on 16 December, of the Gdansk uprising of 1970. [REDACTED]

The most significant political contest in the aftermath of the Popieluszko affair is within the ruling establishment. The murder has heightened the rivalry between the secret police and the military and fueled jealousies caused by Jaruzelski's tendency to place military officers in key government positions. This competition is intertwined in another dispute within the party between hardline officials who tend to have supporters in the secret police and a more moderate faction which

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often agrees with the policies of Jaruzelski. Both sides probably view the coming plenum as an opportunity to press their case. [redacted]

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Jaruzelski's Vulnerabilities

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[redacted] Jaruzelski has in fact made a lot of enemies--not only within the Ministry of the Interior but among many bureaucrats who view his efforts, however modest, to decentralize economic and political decision-making as threats to their jobs. Jaruzelski's decision to grant amnesty to most of the country's political prisoners last July, [redacted] reinforced a view held by a sizable minority within the party that he is too lenient. [redacted]

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One of Jaruzelski's chief weaknesses is the narrowness of his power base, which is restricted mainly to the army. [redacted]

[redacted] The party machinery, therefore, remains strong enough at local levels to sabotage the reformist-type policies that Jaruzelski apparently deems necessary to achieve some national reconciliation and economic recovery. Continued reliance on the military is also inconsistent with Soviet practice and prolongs Moscow's suspicion of Jaruzelski's leadership. [redacted]

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The long-term economic outlook will be a major problem for whoever rules Poland, but the current situation, while far from satisfactory, does not seem explosive. Worker concern about retail price increases and supply shortages has prompted Warsaw to moderate its 1985 plan to be more acceptable to workers. Consumption and real income are now scheduled to rise by 3 to 3.5 percent instead of stagnating as originally planned, while market supplies will increase by slightly more than that amount. Retail prices will rise by 9 percent--the lowest hike since 1980--and food prices will increase by only 3 to 4 percent. [redacted]

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Jaruzelski's Strengths

Despite the difficulties he has with the party bureaucracy, Jaruzelski appears to have sufficient support in the party leadership. At the plenum in late October, for example, he secured unanimous assent to a statement condemning the murder of Popieluszko and authorizing an investigation of the heretofore sacrosanct Ministry of the Interior. Although Jaruzelski was said to have been pressed hard at the plenum by a "group of 9," the views of these middle-level Central Committee members have not been given wide circulation. In contrast, the official press--including newspapers that are reportedly opposed to

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Jaruzelski--has generally been supportive and condemned the crime. Finally, Jaruzelski got the Politburo to place him directly in charge of party cadres in the Interior Ministry, a move that undercut his opponent, Miroslaw Milewski, party secretary for security affairs. [REDACTED]

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Meanwhile, Jaruzelski is taking decisive action to marshal support for the December plenum. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] On 14 November, the party's Central Control Commission approved proposals aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of internal party control. During brief trips to Budapest and East Berlin in mid November, Jaruzelski reportedly sought support from and gave assurances to his neighbors in connection with Poland's political turbulence. The visits had the effect of displaying a confident leader in charge, as did his performance at an unusual press conference on 28 November. Jaruzelski told the journalists that a "rotten cell" had been discovered in the security apparatus, and repeated his promise to pursue the investigation vigorously. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Jaruzelski has taken steps to polish his hardline credentials as well. He has adopted a tough attitude toward the newly formed human rights groups. [REDACTED] he has put the brake on the dialogue with the church. The government is also taking further steps to tighten the liberal law on higher education, a move that has already evoked protests from academics and Solidarity. Finally, Warsaw set conditions which made it virtually impossible for West German Foreign Minister Genscher to visit Poland in late November. [REDACTED]

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In addition probably to holding a discussion of the problems associated with the Popieluszko affair, the plenum this month is scheduled to address the economy. Jaruzelski should be able to deflect criticism by opponents dissatisfied over his economic programs. Industrial production increased by 4 percent this year and the grain harvest was at near-record levels. The supply of goods on the market improved by about 7 percent and, despite the fall in livestock production, the meat rationing requirement was met through imports. The hard currency trade surplus again was above \$1 billion and the USSR allowed Poland to run a trade

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[redacted]

deficit. The Poles negotiated a favorable rescheduling agreement with private banks and continued a de facto moratorium on payments to government creditors. At the same time, Jaruzelski has made little progress in dealing with the deep-rooted causes of Poland's economic problems and still needs to reach an accommodation with the West in order to ensure resumption of normal economic relations. [redacted]

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The Soviet View

The Soviets probably regard Jaruzelski as a mixed blessing. He keeps order but has not been able fully to revitalize the economy or unify the party. Moscow probably sympathizes with those Polish hardliners who are uneasy about the July amnesty, although Premier Tikhonov's presence in Warsaw when the amnesty was announced suggests they made no attempt to block the move.

[redacted]

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Moscow probably views the relative calm in the wake of the Popieluszko murder, and Jaruzelski's tough posture toward the new human rights monitoring groups, as indications that his leadership still offers the best hope for stability in Poland. The Soviets are undoubtedly concerned, however, over the impact that the investigation will have on the more ardently pro-Soviet elements in the government.

[redacted]

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Outlook

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The political fallout from the Popieluszko murder is not yet over. Most Poles believe that punishment should extend beyond the four accused. If Jaruzelski is unable or unwilling to purge Milewski and perhaps others, the public's sense of outrage over the crime will not be satisfied, and Jaruzelski will be perceived as weak and an instrument of the hardline faction. Under these circumstances even his political allies would begin to question whether he should continue as head of the party. If on the other hand Milewski and several others in the party apparatus and the secret police are removed, Jaruzelski's position will be enhanced.

[redacted]

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A partial purge seems the most likely outcome. Both Jaruzelski and the government's press spokesman have already tried to dampen expectations of a wide-ranging house cleaning by publicly warning that the authorities will not create scapegoats and that the continuing investigation may not uncover any high-level instigators. Milewski's ouster, however, would still be a

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coup for Jaruzelski and might encourage him to make a new attempt in the coming months to gain control of the party apparatus. []

But it is equally possible that Jaruzelski will have to pay a political price for Milewski's removal that would include the departure of some of Jaruzelski's supporters. Such a scenario would likely mean a continuing stalemate between moderates and hardliners, failure to solve Poland's numerous problems, and continuing crisis. The popular reaction to such a compromise almost certainly would be hostile. []

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But even under these circumstances, we do not expect an eruption of civil disorder this month. Supplies of goods, including food, traditionally are better during the holiday season and there are no indications that major shortages of staple goods will occur in December. Retail prices are an average of only 13 percent higher than last year--the lowest increase in three years--because the regime placed strict central controls on price hikes of many goods. Most workers, moreover, have more cash to spend in December because of the usual year-end bonuses given out by firms. []

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